



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

Edited by James L. Clifford

*610 Philosophy Hall, Columbia University,
New York 27, N. Y.*

Vol. VI, No. 5

December, 1946

Never before have we gone to press (or should we say "to the Vari-type machine"?) with such a short interval between issues, but the response to our Work in Progress queries has been so widespread, and the other contributions so numerous, that our file is bursting. So here is a last minute addition to Volume VI, making five issues for 1946.

If some new subscribers may be puzzled at the rather hit-or-miss schedule which we follow, some explanation may be advisable. From the start there was no intention of making the *JNL* a quarterly, a bimonthly, or a monthly publication. Only a grab-bag for the use of those interested in 18th century research, the *News-Letter* was not supposed to be a formal periodical. And so the usual procedure has been to wait until the editor's file gets too fat to fit easily into the desk drawer, and then to bring out the next issue. The responsibility, then, is yours. Fill up the file rapidly with interesting contributions and you will get more *News-Letters*; forget to send in that query or that anecdote and you will wait a longer time.

A Blockhead?

Have you ever been openly called a blockhead in print? We have, and it was done in such a way that we liked it. Indeed it was part of one of the most complimentary things said about us in a long time. How? It was this way. In the little sheet regularly issued by the Columbia University Press called "The Pleasures of Publishing" Fon Boardman opened his number of 19 August with the startling announcement: "Professor James L. Clifford of the Columbia University English Department is a blockhead. Now don't get us wrong. It was Samuel Johnson himself who said, according to Boswell: 'No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.' Well, Professor Clifford, as editor, publisher and chief writer of the *Johnsonian News Letter*, certainly doesn't write for money."

At the end of his squib Boardman admitted that your editor was not "a hundred percent blockhead," since he was asking now a nominal dollar bill from all would-be subscribers (A trifle misleading, as some of you may have noticed, since many subscribers have from the start gladly sent in their contributions. But what was meant is that your editor now intends to be a little more business-like in his finances, and expects to send out regular statements).

Part of the account in "The Pleasures of Publishing" was reprinted in the section "People Who Read and Write" in the Sunday *New York Times* Book Section for 25 August. Then came a deluge of inquiries, subscriptions, comments. Librarians, lawyers, doctors, businessmen — all kinds of people wrote asking to be placed on the mailing list. One man sent a large check and asked for copies of all back issues. Another wished copies to be sent to a number of friends. A member of the faculty of the University of Yenching, China, who had spent five war years in western China where she could see no publications of any sort, sent in a subscription. Certainly it showed the magic of the name Johnson — the general interest in anything connected with him and his circle. Of course we were delighted, since it allows us to widen our range to take in Johnsonian enthusiasts outside the academic profession. We welcome the professional and businessmen, the collectors and the housewives. We hope that they will continue to be interested in our sheet, and will send in entertaining items and comments.

James Boswell's Scotland

Richard A. Herzberg (135 Mercer Place, S. Orange, N.J.) writes an account of his wartime experiences in Scotland:

You may be interested in knowing that, while serving overseas, I found, and bought, a first of Boswell's *HEBRIDES* in a small newspaper shop in Ayr. The owner first quoted 7/ — but when I came to pay, evidently decided that that was too much to charge for so old a book and would take only 5/. Bargains like that were rare — a second of *CORSICA* and "firsts of Johnson's" *POLITICAL TRACTS* and *WESTERN SCOTLAND* were a good deal more in London.

While still in Ayrshire, I did get to the Boswell home in Auchinleck — pronounced, despite the guide books, as it is spelled and not "Affleck." At the time I was there, the house was vacant, between tours of duty as barracks. The gardens, although only haphazardly tended, still retain their Eighteenth

Century beauty; the old castle, which Johnson preferred to the new house, still stands. Unfortunately, the ancient structures at the four corners of the house — which is, considering its recent use, in excellent condition — are damaged; some of the troops — the caretaker said they were French — used the walls of these structures to pin pistol targets on.

The James Boswell remembered by the old inhabitant in the church yard is not the James we know, but a later one, a barrister, I believe, who was knighted. Boswell is still not popular in his home county; Ayrshire is filled with monuments, invariably ugly, to Burns, but little attention is paid to the biographer, and no note made of the fact he was born near-by. There is, however, an edition of *WESTERN SCOTLAND* published in Kilmarnock, which I have. The introduction notes that the book is used as a school text in some of the islands of the Hebrides.

The New Edition of Evelyn's Diary

It is good news that the long-awaited complete edition of Evelyn's diary is almost ready for printing. Edited by E. S. de Beer for the Oxford Press, this will be one of the major contributions to scholarship of our time. The text will run to about 600,000 words, and the explanatory footnotes will number well over 10,000. As a work of reference and a scholarly tool it should be invaluable; as a commentary on the late 17th century, the diary, now for the first time made available in its entirety, will be of interest to everyone interested in the Restoration period.

Annual Bibliography, 1660-1800

At long last, the April 1946 number of *PQ* has appeared with the annual bibliography of English Literature, 1660-1800. Again we owe a great debt of gratitude to Arthur Friedman and Louis Landa for their long hours of patient labor and their continued devotion to the cause.

In this connection we might mention a recent letter from Jim Work (Stanford) urging the republication in volume-form of the annual bibliographies. He suggests that Groups VII and VIII of the M.L.A. take this as a common project, to provide some assistance to Friedman and Landa in the mechanical labors of assembling and organizing the material. What do you think? Can we do anything practical to help? Certainly you all must recognize how valuable such an 18th century bibliography would be.

A New Edition of Pottle's *The Idiom of Poetry*

It has long been your editor's firm conviction that Frederick A. Pottle's *The Idiom of Poetry* is one of the most important critical works of our time. And we have often been puzzled and annoyed by the lack of references to it in the literary discussions of our more popular critics. Here is the best written, the most logically reasoned, the most thought provoking defense of a point of view which is becoming more and more widespread — critical relativism. Here is a brilliant adaptation to literary evaluation of the most influential scientific and philosophic theory of the twentieth century. Yet it would appear that many serious readers are wholly unaware of the existence of the book.

Perhaps one reason for this comparative neglect is the fact that Pottle's volume has for some time been out of print. Now, however, that excuse is invalid, for the Cornell University Press has just brought out a splendid new edition. It is more than a mere reprinting of the original text, since the author has thoroughly revised the original six lectures, and for good measure has added three more. The result is a new book, more extensive and more comprehensive.

Another reason for the lack of interest manifest in certain circles is that the aesthete is usually scornful of everything connected with science, and it must be remembered that Pottle has reinforced his arguments with numerous analogies from Einsteinian physics. To offset this criticism, Pottle has provided for the new edition an "Alternative Beginning and a Summary" in which he stresses instead a linguistic approach. As he points out, the main argument of relativism can be based almost more effectively on linguistic, rather than on physical analogies.

One of the commonest attacks on the book has developed from the author's frank admission that while he is a relativist in aesthetics and literature he is a positivist in religion and morals. To explain his stand more fully, Pottle has now added two more chapters: "Dogma, Science, and Poetry," and "The Moral Evaluation of Literature." In these he presents at some length the philosophy of discontinuity by which he justifies his apparent inconsistency. To be sure, these additional essays, originally written for other purposes, are sometimes repetitious, as the author himself admits, but they serve admirably to strengthen and explain his case.

We cannot insist often enough that every one of you should read Pottle's arguments over and over. If you have (as he has) been long irritated by the bland erection by so many literary critics of the

"Romantic temperament into a dogma," of the insistence that only poetry of the emotions is poetry, then you should read his discerning analysis of this position. On the other hand, if you still cling to the positivist Romantic rules of poetry, or to Housman's physiological tests, you ought in decency to study carefully the other point of view. On the lowest level here is a wealth of controversial material — good for long arguments into the early hours of the morning for years to come.

Johnson's Other Cat

In our last issue, you may remember, we passed on a puzzler from the English *New Rambler*, asking the name of another of Johnson's cats, besides Hodge. The suggestion was made that you study the *Life*. Two of our readers — C. A. Miller (Wash., D.C.) and Herman Liebert (Yale) — have pointed out that, strictly speaking, the reference is not in the *Life*, but rather in one of Johnson's letters, where he writes of "Lilly, the white kittling." Did you spot it too?

Liebert suggests another little puzzle. We all know about one of Johnson's servants, Francis Barber. But can you name another servant? Sharpen your wits on that one.

Work in Progress

The response to our return-postcard solicitation has been splendid, and we are overjoyed at this evidence of interest and cooperation. If you still have not listed your project, send it in for the next issue. Here are the first returns, assembled for us by Bill Payne.

General

- ABRAMS, M.H. (Cornell). *The Transition to Romantic Theories of Poetry*. (To be completed in 1947).
- BERKELEY, David S. (Harvard). *Sentimentalism and Restoration Comedy*. D. (Harvard).
- BOYCE, Benjamin (Nebraska). *The "Character" and the Development of Prose Fiction in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*. A Study of the "character" after 1642.
- DOWNER, Alan S. (Princeton). *English Acting Techniques* (The 18th and 19th century portions are completed).
- HECHT, J. Jean (New York University). *The Domestick Servant Class in Eighteenth Century England*. D. (Harvard).
- HUGHES, Helen Sard (10 Lovewell Road, Wellesley, Mass.). *Chapbook Fiction and Its Relation to Standard Fiction of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*.

JONES, Claude E. (UCLA). *The Critical Review and Poetry, 1756-65*
(Accepted for publication).

LOVEJOY, Arthur O. (Johns Hopkins). *Pride and Shame: A Study in the History of the Theory of Human Nature in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (This should be completed in 1947).

_____, *The Romantic Theory of Knowledge*. "The destruction of Reason and Understanding, the 'intellektuelle Anschauung' etc., in German and English writers, 1790-1830" (This study is about half done).

MILLER, Frances S. (Maine). *The Historic Sense in the English Novel, 1762-1800* (Practically done).

MOORE, Maurice, Jr. (University of the South). *Political Eulogy and Satire in English Verse, 1714-1760*. D. (North Carolina).

NOYES, Gertrude E. (Connecticut College). *The Development of the English Dictionary, 1755-1830* (This is a continuation of a project, one volume (1604-1755) of which has already appeared).

NOYES, Robert Gale (Brown). *The Drama and Stage as Reflected in the Eighteenth Century Novel* (Half done).

PARKER, Alice (135 Anderson Street, St. Charles, Missouri). *The Idea of Crime and Punishment in the Eighteenth Century from Defoe to Bentham*. Excluding Fielding and Smollett examined in her Yale dissertation, 1939.

QUINTANA, Ricardo (Wisconsin). *The Post-Restoration: The Background and Some Figures* (About half done).

ROGERS, Robert W. (Harvard). *Concepts of Nature in Eighteenth Century Poetry*. A study of the use of the term "nature" by the poets from Pope to Wordsworth.

RUNDLE, James (Indiana). *The Influence of Spanish Comedy on Restoration Comedy*. D. (University of Cincinnati).

WILSON, John Harold (Ohio State). *The Court Wits of the Restoration: An Introduction* (In final revision).

WINSHIP, G. P., Jr. (Lehigh). *A Study of the Essay Journal The World, 1743-1757*. D. (University of North Carolina).

Addison, Joseph, etc.

SHAVER, Chester L. (Oberlin). *Addison, Johnson, and Wordsworth on Epitaphs*.

Bowles, William Lisle

KELLOGG, Alfred L. (Yale). *A Biography of William Lisle Bowles* (This is a doctoral thesis (Yale, 1941) which is being revised for publication).

Churchill, Charles

WEATHERBY, Edward H. (Missouri). *A Biographical and Critical Study of Charles Churchill* (Midway).

Combe, William

HAMILTON, Harlan W. (Western Reserve). *A Biographical Study of William Combe* (In collaboration with Franz Montgomery. This should be completed in 1947).

Congreve, William

HODGES, John C. (University of Tennessee). *The Correspondence of Congreve*. He would "appreciate" notice of any new letter by Congreve, or any letter addressed to him."

Cowper, William

HANNAY, Neilson C. (Suffolk University). *A Factual Life and Evaluation of William Cowper* (More than twenty years of research completed, and the writing in progress).

_____, *The Correspondence of William Cowper*. To be collated with all known originals. More than two-thirds of the collating finished.

Defoe, Daniel

REEVE, Juliet (Friends University). *Daniel Defoe and the Quakers* (Research almost completed; study in England desirable).

Dryden, John

ALBAUGH, Ralph M. (Ohio State). *Dryden's Literary and Personal Relationships, 1689-1700*. D. (Ohio State).

SMITH, R. Jack (Wells College). *Dryden's Principles of Criticism* (About one-quarter written).

TROWBRIDGE, Hoyt (Oregon). *Dryden's Criticism* (Two articles on this subject have been published; the manuscript of the book is about one-third done).

Foote, Samuel

NOYES, Robert Gale (Brown). *An Edition of The Handsome Housemaid; or, Piety in Pattens* (Collection of material completed).

Garrick, David

KAHRL, George M. (Elmira). *The Correspondence of David Garrick*. In collaboration with Mr. David M. Little of Harvard. (More than half completed).

Hurd, Richard

SMITH, Audley L. (George Washington). *The Complete Works of Richard Hurd* (Well advanced).

SMITH, Audley L. *An Edition of Hurd's Commonplace Book* (Virtually completed).

Johnson, Samuel

ABRAMS, M. H. (Cornell). *Dr. Johnson's Poetry and Criticism* (a volume to be completed in 1948).

MEITZDORF, Robert F. (Rochester). *A Bibliography of Johnson's Rasselas*. More than 550 editions and issues have been noted.

Macklin, Charles

VINCENT, Howard P. (Illinois Institute of Technology). *A Biography of Charles Macklin* (Well along; needs a summer in the Public Records Office in London).

Monboddo, Lord

SHERWIN, Oscar (C.C.N.Y.). *A Man with a Tail: Lord Monboddo* (Completed).

Percy, Thomas

DENNIS, Leah (Alabama College). *The Percy-Warton Letters*. In collaboration with C. Q. Robinson of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. (To be published by the Louisiana State University Press).

Pope, Alexander

ALLISON, James L. (Harvard). *Contemporary Reputation of Pope's Early Poems, 1710-1756*. D. (Harvard).

AMES, Alfred C. (Illinois Institute of Technology). *English Criticism of Pope's Poetry* (This is a doctoral thesis (Illinois, 1943) which is being revised for publication).

Priestley, Joseph

PARK, Mary Cathryne (Pennsylvania). *Joseph Priestley (1733-1804): A Problem in Pantisocracy*. D. (Pennsylvania).

Rich, John

VINCENT, Howard P. (Illinois Institute of Technology). *A Biography of John Rich* (Well along; needs a summer at the Public Records Office in London).

Smollett, Tobias

NORWOOD, Luella F. (Colby). *A Bibliography of Tobias Smollett* (Three-fourths of the work done; most of the collations in final form).

Steele, Richard

ACHURCH, Robert Waller (The Citadel). *Why Steele Dropped the "St. James's Department" from the Tatler* (Completed except for revision).

Why Steele Lost the Gazetteership but Retained His Commissionership in the Stamp Office (Completed except for revision).

Sterne, Laurence

HAMMOND, Lansing V. (Russell Sage). *Laurence Sterne's 'Sermons of Mr. Yorick'* (Ready for publication).

Walpole, Horace

HAZEN, A. T. (Chicago). *A Bibliography of Horace Walpole* (Nearly completed).

Walsh, William

VETTER, Dale B. (Illinois State Normal), *The Literary Criticism of William Walsh*. D. (Northwestern) (This is being revised for publication).

Warton, Joseph

HYSHAM, Julia (Skidmore). *Joseph Warton, A Critical Study*. D. (Columbia).

Warton, Thomas

KELLOGG, Alfred L. (Yale). *Thomas Warton's Summer Tours* (Obtaining material).

Wesley, John

SHERWIN, Oscar (C.C.N.Y.). *John Wesley: A Study of His Social and Literary Importance*.

Young, Edward

PETTIIT, Henry (Colorado). *A Bibliography of Young's Night-Thoughts* (Ready for publication).

The Correspondence of Young (Indexing completed).

Miscellaneous Items

We deeply regret the resignation of the editors of our sister publication, *A Seventeenth Century News Letter*, and hope that some way may be arranged so that the project can be continued.

Word has come that E. G. Cox (Univ. of Wash.) is reading proof for the third volume of his *Reference Travel* series, this one dealing with travel and description provided by the British Isles and Ireland. We will hope to see it out soon.

Publication of Mary Alden Hopkins' *Hannah More and Her Circle* has been postponed; it is now scheduled to appear January 29.

G. P. Winship, Jr. (Lehigh) suggests that we mention T. H. White's *Mistress Masham's Repose*, that very entertaining fable of the exiles from Lilliput. Any student of the early 18th century will find the book wholly delightful. As Winship puts it, "scholarly lore is at the bottom of many of White's comic elaborations in the tale, and while the book is ostensibly a juvenile, the juvenile category is too narrow a one, as it was for White's Arthurian fantasies."

No one should miss Samuel Monk's superb review-article "Dryden the Craftsman" in the Autumn, 1946, *Sewanee Review*. With Mark Van Doren's new edition as a starting point, Monk gives us a very valuable critical appraisal of Dryden's technique and poetic achievement.

In *The Bibliographical Society 1892-1942 -- Studies in Retrospect* there is a chapter some of you may have missed, in which Harold Williams gives a survey of the 18th century articles published in the transactions of the Society and in *The Library*.

A new book about Johnson and his friends, *Ursa Major* by C. E. Vulliamy, has appeared in England. So far, we have not seen a copy, but if it is anything like his other biographies — of Boswell, Mrs. Thrale, etc. — it is probably the worst book ever written about the Johnson circle, and there have been some bad ones. Perhaps we are wrong; we hope so. Anyway, more about it in our next.

It is always pleasant to find items from the *JNL* passed on to a wider audience in other periodicals. So we welcome the news that Sarah Chokla Gross means to include all the drama entries from our Work in Progress section in her *Broadside*, issued by the Theatre Library Association.

De Quincey on Johnson and Chesterfield

We wonder how many of you have seen the little privately printed brochure containing a facsimile of a hitherto unprinted essay of Thomas De Quincey concerning Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield. The manuscript, now in the possession of Harry Glickman, was published by Ben Abramson, 3 W. 46th St., New York City.

De Quincey found Johnson guilty of bad taste and unjustified vituperation. Johnson's celebrated letter to Chesterfield is called "petulant and boyish at best; but at the worst it bore a more sinister construction." Johnson's behaviour, Dr. Quincey insisted, was "that of a sturdy beggar" who "refuses to ask for money, but

expects to have it delivered to him instanter on looking through the window with a face like that of Frankenstein's monster." Here is the other side to the famous declaration of independence of the author.

A Yankee Criticism of Johnson

Lewis Leary (Duke) sends in a criticism of Johnson made by a hard-headed Yankee, which we suspect not many of you will know. It is contained in the little essay series *The Yankee in London* (1809) by Judge Royall Tyler of Vermont:

...Although he cannot boast of originality, Dr. Johnson set the fashion of this gossiping biography of the kind Boswell was guilty of perpetrating. In his lives of the British poets, he was sedulous to collect those little ana which make weak readers laugh and wise men grieve. From him we learn that Addison tippled, and his wife was a termagant; that Prior affected sordid converse in base company, and that his Chloe was a despicable drab; that Pope was a glutton, and fell sacrifice to a silver sauce-pan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampries; and that Rag Smith was a sloven. When I first read Johnson's *Lives of the British Poets* I regretted those littlenesses, but when I read his life of the immortal Milton, the latchet of whose shoes (with reverence be it spoken) he was not worthy to unloose, I then hoped I should live to see the day when some biographer of his own school might write this author's life, and mete out to him the measure he meted unto others. I have lived to be fully gratified — I have read the life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D., by Mrs. Hester Thrale, Sir John Hawkins, and James Boswell, Esq., and, to my infinite satisfaction, these three have raised a tripod of incense to his fame, from which any man of decent regard to his reputation would be happy to fly for sanctuary to the pillory.

Last Minute Bulletin

The 18th century luncheon in Washington was a great success, thanks to the valliant efforts of George Winchester Stone. Ninety-four people were on hand for a good meal and short remarks by Stone, L. I. Bredvold, R. K. Root, R. D. Havens, etc.

